



## Christopher Columbus

Christopher Columbus was born in Genoa, Italy in 1451. His career in exploration started when he was very young. As a teenager he traveled the seas and eventually made Portugal his base. Columbus came to believe that the East Indies (present day Indonesia and surrounding islands) could be reached by sailing west through the Atlantic Ocean. He appealed to the kings of Portugal, France and England to finance a westward trip to the Indies, but all denied his request. After ten years of monumental efforts but fruitless results, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain agreed to finance Columbus in the hopes of acquiring great wealth. On August 3, 1492, Columbus, crew, and three ships, the Nina, Pinta, and Santa Maria, left Palos, Spain and headed westward.

After stopping in the Canary Islands off the coast of Africa, Columbus' ships hit the open seas. Covering about 150 miles a day, the trip was long and arduous. The crew was afraid of sea monsters and grew more restless every day land was not sighted. Columbus offered a reward for the first person to sight land. On October 12, a crew member aboard the Pinta sighted one of the Bahama Islands. Columbus set foot on what he believed was one of the Spice Islands, a group of islands in Asia (now known as Indonesia), where valuable spices and riches came from. He named the land San Salvador. Columbus failed to find the riches he expected, and continued to search for China. He next visited Cuba and Hispaniola (Dominican Republic). He encountered native peoples who he named "Indians" because he believed they were inhabitants of the Indies.

Columbus returned to Spain a hero. He was named viceroy of the Indies. He soon returned to the New World but never found the riches he expected. Some began to believe that Columbus had found "a new world" rather than a shortcut to the Indies.

Christopher Columbus made one of the greatest discoveries in the history of the world - North America. Though he probably wasn't the first explorer to see the continent, and he believed until his death that the islands he encountered were in the Asian continent, his discoveries were instrumental in the establishment of Spanish colonies in North America. Today, we celebrate Columbus Day in October to commemorate his discoveries.

**1.) Which of the following is an accurate representation of what Christopher Columbus believed?**

- A. He believed the Indies could be reached by sailing east.
- B. He believed North America could be reached by sailing west.
- C. He believed the Indies could be reached by sailing west.
- D. He believed the Indies could not be reached.

**2.) Why did the King and Queen of Spain agree to pay for Christopher's trip?**

- A. To spread Christianity
- B. To acquire more wealth
- C. To start a war with France
- D. To start a war with Portugal

**3.) Which of the following was an example of how Columbus MOTIVATED his sailors?**

- A. He offered them more food for every day they were at sea.
- B. He offered a reward to the first sailor to see land.
- C. He threatened any sailor who complained with death.
- D. He told them stories of sea monsters.

**4.) Which of the following is NOT correct?**

- A. A sailor from the Pinta was the first to see land.
- B. Columbus believed he had reached the Spice Islands.
- C. Columbus named an island San Salvador.
- D. Columbus found a lot riches.

**5.) Before the sailors saw land, they were.....**

- A. Disappointed
- B. Restless
- C. Triumphant
- D. Bored

**6.) Columbus....**

- A. Eventually figured out he found a new continent
- B. Eventually found the riches he had hoped for
- C. Never figured out he had found a new continent
- D. Never returned to Spain

**7.) For Spain, Columbus' journey was most important because...**

- A. It enabled them to extend their empire
- B. They could spread their religion to the New World
- C. They were guaranteed great wealth
- D. It established Columbus Day as a national holiday.

**8.) Which of the following COULD NOT be a title for this passage?**

- A. The Life and Times of Christopher Columbus
- B. The Discovery of the New World
- C. Columbus Sails East
- D. An Incredible Journey

**9.) What does the word 'commemorate' mean as used in the following sentence?**

Today, we celebrate Columbus Day in October to commemorate his discoveries.

- A. Discover
- B. Remember
- C. Dispute
- D. Transform

**10.) Which of the following best summarizes the importance of Christopher Columbus?**

- A. He discovered an entire continent that would change the course of world history.
- B. He discovered a shortcut to the Indies that made trading easier.
- C. He became one of the most beloved explorers in history.
- D. His journeys resulted in the word "Indians."